

New mindsets to innovate activation

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PROPOSITIONS

MIRA BIERBAUM

- (1) The Dutch way towards a participatory society is not the way towards an inclusive society.
- (2) The terms activation and responsibility and their uses need to be critically deconstructed, rethought, and rephrased in light of the lived experiences of people living with social assistance benefits and their relative position in society.
- (3) Protecting the personal integrity and dignity of social assistance recipients is a moral imperative, yet there is also an economic rationale. Carefully used, self-affirmation of citizens can boost job search-related self-efficacy.
- (4) Providing activation workers with a professional identity is crucial as the way in which activation workers frame their role influences their decision-making and, ultimately, citizens' opportunities and constraints.
- (5) Social protection cannot be approached from a silo mentality. The links between income protection, labour market programmes, collective bargaining, or care policies need to be considered in unison.
- (6) Only decent work is acceptable work. Work should deliver a fair income, workplace security and social protection, but also opportunities for personal growth and social inclusion.
- (7) "If the receipt of benefit is seen as an unfortunate sign of failure, if such benefits are administered in ways inconsistent with twenty-first-century ideas about human dignity, the system is not fit for purpose" (Atkinson, 2015, p. 212). The Dutch social security system is not fit for purpose.
- (8) In a world that has never been richer, but where inequality and poverty persist and populism is on the rise, we need to negotiate a new social contract behind a veil of ignorance.